

To: MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force,

The Board of Island Cove Estates represents a small subdivision of 71 parcels, 5 miles south of Pt. Arena. The members of our homeowners association share common ownership of a small cove and beach and a short stretch of shoreline. Over the 47 years of our existence, our members, past and present, have put a high priority on the protection of our beloved cove and its marine resources. We are proud of our stewardship and derive a great sense of community from our efforts.

We have been following the MLPA process with special interest and are dismayed that some of the draft proposals would create regulations that would eliminate our very limited impact on our cove's abundant sea life. As has been pointed out by numerous contributors to the MLPA process, the coastline between Schooner Gulch and Gualala is a harsh environment for a fishery. Its strong winds and high seas provide a high level of natural protection. Boats are rare, as launch sites are distant and human activity is very limited by the difficult conditions; it is a reliably inhospitable area.

It therefore seems clear that a high level of regulation in this area would not result in a great difference to an already thriving marine ecosystem. This area will continue to do well with or without MLPA protection. The only real result of such protection will be to deprive coastal owners of the pleasures of fishing or diving for abalone, activities in this area that have negligible impact. Statistics from 2002 indicate that the Saunders Landing location had the 3rd lowest abalone take in Mendocino County; this is the primary inshore activity, with fishing at an even lower level.

We would prefer that the Saunders Reef area not be placed in a restricted zone. Of the present three main proposals, Proposal 1-3 makes the most sense for sub-region 1. This proposal recognizes the existence of a de facto natural reserve. Next in order of preference for us would be proposal 2X-A, which includes a Saunders Reef SMCA but provides for some shore-based activities. The remaining Proposal 4 is highly restrictive and would be a very disappointing result of this process and the many efforts to incorporate reasonable public input. The correct action regarding Saunders Reef seems very clear; it is not an area in need of such highly restrictive regulations, and therefore the adoption of Proposal 4 would be very poorly received by our local community.

Additionally, the issue of oversight and enforcement remains a difficulty, if landowners are no longer motivated to be a part of the protective process and the burden falls on our already overextended local wardens. It would be a mistake to reduce the incentive to continue the longstanding partnership that has existed between the DFG and property owners.

As private property owners we are committed to protecting our marine resources for future generations. We do not believe that the goals of the MLPA must be in conflict with our

interests. We believe that the proposals we support incorporate our concerns without negatively impacting the goals and interests of the various stakeholders or the intent of the MLPA initiative. We appreciate the hard work of the many people involved in this process and their commitment an open, transparent process. We hope that the result is a proposal chosen for implementation that will strike the right balance for our unique region.

The Island Cove Board of Directors

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